



Energy Policy Act West-wide Energy Corridors PROGRAMMATIC EIS

Lead Federal Agencies



U.S. Department of Energy



U.S. Department of the Interior,
Bureau of Land Management

Cooperating Federal Agencies



U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Forest Service



U.S. Department of Defense



U.S. Department of the Interior,
Fish and Wildlife Service

INTRODUCTION

- Briefly describe the WEC-PEIS project
- Why it is a Programmatic
- Discuss major challenges
- Lessons Learned
- Questions/ Discussion

WEC-PEIS: The Project

- Congressional Mandate: Section 368 Energy Policy Act 2005
 - Directs Secretaries of Energy, Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, and Defense (**the Agencies**) to:
 - Designate corridors for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission facilities on ***federal land*** in the 11 contiguous western states
 - Perform **necessary environmental reviews**
 - Incorporate designated corridors into relevant **land use/management** plans

Legislative Objectives

- Designate corridors that specify:
 - Centerline
 - Width
 - Compatible uses
- Take into account the need for :
 - Improving reliability of the electric transmission grid
 - Relieving transmission congestion
 - Enhancing the capability of the national grid to deliver electricity
- Expedite the permitting process

Agency Decisions

- Congress mandated a land use planning action
- In designating corridors, the Agencies needed to:
 - Incorporate specific decisions into local plans
 - Ensure decisions not made in isolation
 - Corridors must be part of an enhanced national grid
 - Ensure connections among corridors are significant
 - Ensure that permitting processes are integrated
- This required national, interagency coordination

Implementation: The PEIS

- Congress mandated “environmental reviews”
- Agencies decided NEPA was appropriate to analyze environmental effects of the decisions:
 - Major federal action with potential to affect the quality of the human environment
 - Established and familiar process to examine environmental concerns
 - Early public participation
 - Permits tiering for later site-specific projects

Programmatic EIS

- Broad geographic scope
 - Eleven western states
 - Multiple jurisdictions
 - Meet national objectives
 - Enhance the national electricity grid
 - Reduce congestion, improve reliability
- Improve agency program
- Support tiering for future projects
 - Actual project development only after second round of environmental review and decision making

Records of Decision

- Jan 14, 2009: DOI and USDA sign RODs amending BLM and USFS land use plans
 - Designate over 6,000 miles of energy transport corridors (5,000 on BLM land)
 - Adopt Interagency Operating Procedures (IOP) to improve permitting process and ensure environmental protections for future development
 - Commit BLM and USFS to working together on implementation processes

Many Challenges

- Many challenges along the way:
 - NEPA process issues, e.g.
 - Definition of alternatives
 - Impact analyses
 - PEIS discusses these and how resolved
 - Focus today—What's not in the PEIS
 - Challenges presented by scope and scale for coordination, communication to get job done
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Resolution was key to completing the project

Multiple Players

- Who's in charge, anyway?
 - Interagency Coordination
 - Intra-Agency Coordination
- External consultation and communication
 - Congress, Governors, Counties, other federal agencies
 - Tribes
 - Public
- Managing an evolving process

Coordination and Communication

- Interagency
 - Five different agencies named in the law
 - Each agency:
 - Internal divisions: managers, program staff, solicitors, NEPA coordinators, etc.
 - Internal hierarchy:
 - Departmental
 - Agency
 - WO, field structure
 - Each agency—need to concur with decisions
 - Internal decision-making structure

Interagency Coordination Structure

- Interagency MOU at outset
 - Defined agency roles
 - DOE = lead
 - BLM = co-lead for project, Lead for DOI
 - Other Agencies Cooperators or Consulting
- Interagency Executive Team
 - Consist of Point of Contact (POCs) for each agency
 - POCs speak for the agency on the team
 - POCs responsible for coordinating internal agency
 - Ex. Team provide direction to contractor
- Argonne National Lab, contractor

Interagency Coordination

- Management Team
 - Exec. Team plus Argonne project leads
 - Effectively the working body for the project
- Team responsibilities
 - National-level communications: Congress, governors, national groups, Tribes
 - Coordinate all project business: e.g.
 - Public Involvement
 - Federal Register Notices
 - Document reviews, etc.
 - Coordinate all policy issues

Interagency Coordination

- Management Team Workgroups
 - Establish for specific purposes
 - Tribal Working Group—tribal consultation
- Overall structure worked well
 - Took some time to establish working relationships among agencies
 - Was key to getting the job done

Internal Agency Coordination

- POC for each agency responsible for:
 - Internal coordination with management for policy issues
 - Solicitors
 - NEPA
 - Program guidance and review
 - Public Affairs
 - Ensure coordination among inter-agency management, solicitors, staff as needed

DOI Coordination

- BLM was the lead for DOI
 - FWS, NPS, BOR, BIA involved
 - FWS as Cooperating Agency
 - NPS as consulting agency
- Each DOI agency had a POC who worked through the BLM POC
 - Responsible for internal agency coordination
- FWS, NPS POCs also participated on Interagency Team

BLM—Who is in Charge, Anyway?

- Most significant issue: Clarify roles and responsibilities
 - WO project — some assumption that WO was doing it all
 - But — corridors are local
 - Need to conform to local land use plans
- This issue — worked out over time

BLM—Roles and Responsibilities

- WO — Project Manager coordinate with WO players:
 - Senior leadership, BLM (Energy Team, AD's, Director), DOI, Solicitors
 - Updates/ briefings
 - Policy issues
 - WO team
 - Resource specialists
 - Public Affairs
 - Planning
- WO coordinated with State project leads

STATE PROJECT LEADS

- State Project Leads were responsible for coordination with
 - SO resource, planning, public affairs
 - SO leadership
 - Field Offices
- Field Office project leads were responsible for coordination with
 - Resource professionals and managers
 - Local entities as appropriate (e.g. counties)
 - Ensuring corridor compatibility with local RMPs

INTERNAL BLM COORDINATION

- All levels were responsible for:
 - Providing data as requested
 - Reviewing WO team work for accuracy and issues
 - Coordination with Argonne when necessary
- Very workable but should clarify at beginning and review time-to-time
 - Busy Field Offices
 - Staff turn-over

External Coordination and Communication

- Public Involvement is critical
 - Public suspicious of PEIS's
 - Common comment—what are we hiding
 - Using PEIS to short-cut later review
 - Ensure consistent message, timely, accurate information, maximum outreach
- Big PEIS's—many constituents
 - How to engage

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- Developed Communication Plan early
 - Developed and approved by interagency Team
 - WO Public Affairs had lead
 - Identify specific roles and responsibilities
 - Provided consistent information and messages
- Website
 - Good, current, interactive Website — key

LESSONS LEARNED

- Plan, Structure, Engage, Adapt
- Develop structure to integrate entities early on
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for everyone
- Engage players throughout the process
 - “no surprises”
- Remember things change—be flexible